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Home sweet home
Our newest series kicks off on page 2

Mother Nature magic
Looking for artwork on page 5

Spring critters
How to protect local wildlife this season on page 12

Hoppy Easter!
A past Easter event at Abbey Gardens, where the Easter Bunny paid a visit to the Haliburton Highlands. /FILE

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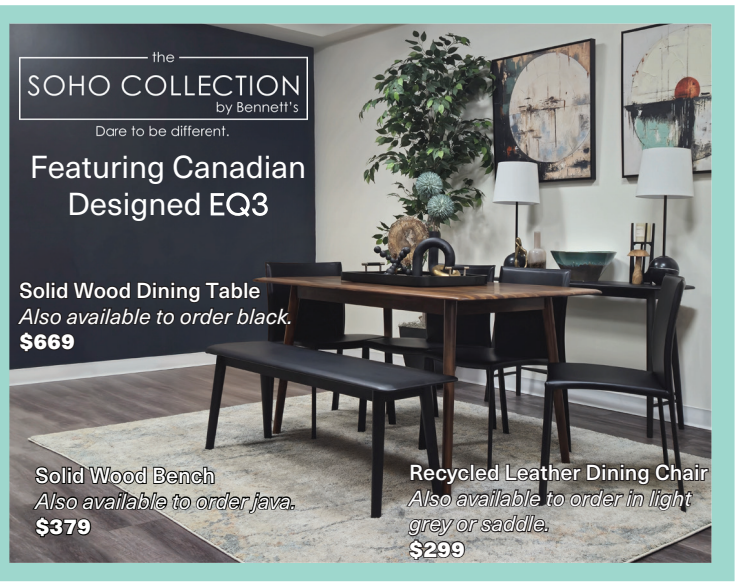

How we got here

KAREN PHIPPS
County Life Contributor

Home, it's a word that immediately conjures up emotions. It's a place that is so intrinsic to who we are, that it's hard to understand its power. It's a place that can center us, a place that grounds us from the turbulence of life. People long for it, cherish it, wars have been fought to protect it. At times we don't realize its power until we have left it behind. Often in our youth we are anxious to cut the ties, move on, explore who we are outside the constraints of home. It can feel liberating, freeing, a chance to venture on, peel away the binding roots that have helped us define, mold, and become. This is not to say that we have only one home, there can be many in our lifetimes. Home is a place, a space we commit to, a stage where we live out our lives. Home provides the buffers, the structure, the basin from which we grow.

Many people have come to call Haliburton County their home. This is their space, their place, their stage. Haliburton County has been my home for almost 30 years, making me a relative newbie to the area. I first came to Haliburton as a young girl when my parents rented a cottage on Drag Lake. I remember loving the smell of the pines, the way the sun shone on the multiple lakes that made the water glisten and look alive. I loved seeing the rocks appearing along the side of the highways on the drive "up north". It felt like we were entering a different land, a quieter, natural space and even back then it felt like home. I remember taking the boat across the lake and going into town to watch the very first (and my only) *Rocky* movie at the Molou (I can still hear Stallone yelling "Adrienne"). A few years later my sister got a summer job at the Wigamog. The day we drove her up to drop her off felt emotionally heavy as I wondered what it would be like to spend our first summer apart. It was the beginning of an inescapable realization that life is a journey of change, nothing stays the same, a complicated mix of sadness and excitement.

I had no idea at the time that in less than 20 years, I would be calling Haliburton County my home. Lake Kashagawigamog would be rolling off my tongue, and I would know that only the tourist called it by its full name. People lucky enough to live here just call it Kash. The nuances of home.

I am always interested in how people arrived here. Some families have roots that go back many generations, some have come to live out their retirement surrounded by a beautiful natural space and a vibrant community. There are as many stories as there are people in this community, and how they came to arrive here, is always accompanied by a fascinating journey made by themselves or their ancestors. These are our stories, the threads of a community that bind us together and make Haliburton County a complex, diverse and colourful fabric.

How We Got Here will be a bi-monthly column that explores peoples stories and highlights the challenges, humour and often serendipitous journey that lead them to this place we call home. I'm excited to hear your stories and highlight the individual threads that weave us together. .

The idea of home is particularly poignant in light of the recent threats from the South that have made all Canadians stand a little taller and reflect on what it means to be Canadian. This recent threat has united us as a nation with an invisible thread that connects our common experience, our shared values and our that ties us to the land.

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CountyLife

The following inserts are being distributed with County Life this week:

Foodland *

Haliburton Highlands Real Estate

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Shoppers Drug Mart Haliburton *

Todd's Independent *

Welcome to Haliburton *

All inserts are to selected distribution areas.

For information on how your flyer can be inserted each week in County Life please contact Melissa Armstrong at **613-332-2002** or **melissa@haliburtonpress.com**

The ginger route

DEB REED
Wind in the Attic

I LOVE WALKING Toronto's Danforth Avenue. It's like travelling the culinary world without dropping cash on airfare. It's impossible to get lost, since 'The Danforth' is merely a renamed extension of historic Bloor Street, the city's main east-west corridor. It's a guaranteed way to 'get your steps', and if you want to pause for roti, Guinness, sushi or souvlaki, there's infinity to choose from.

I was marching there the other day, browsing stores and imagining my supper, when I passed a typical food market. Like in many an 'old country', wooden outdoor tables offered daily deals on rainbows of fresh produce. There were blood oranges, shallots, pomegranates, plantain, figs, jackfruit, cucumbers, mangoes, melons, eggplants, blueberries and tomatoes, among myriad other imported or greenhouse-grown healthy choices for our meals tonight.

Shoppers hunted judiciously, inspecting each fruit and vegetable before committing to the cashier. The aproned shopkeeper kept peaceful watch, greeting familiar patrons, tweaking arrangements, offering paper bags, answering questions, picking off leaves still attached to exotic harvest from far far away. Kitty-corner to his market was a parked OPP cruiser. Two uniformed officers chatted in subdued conference over some local subterfuge.

It was a mild afternoon, and sidewalks were busier than yesterday's when I'd marched the same stretch in much colder sunshine. I approached the stalls with a thought to buy 2-for-1 papayas. An older woman, perhaps my age, was just ahead of me, and investigating the arrays. It was her black platform Crocs I noticed first. They looked both elegant and strange. She clutched a reusable cloth carryall, and sniffed at each fruit she examined.

When she reached the massive display of ginger roots, she sniffed there also, and weighed different sizes in her hand. Suddenly, without checking around, and despite the nearby policemen, she quickly dropped a sizeable ginger root into her bag. I was next to her by now, and stopped in my tracks. She saw me see her.

I said nothing, but kept my eyes on hers. She silently jerked both her hands in the air as if to challenge me, to dare me. Or else she felt guilty. Or frightened. Or mad. Or caught.

Next she crossed the Danforth towards some apartments. She dodged traffic without panic, and continued to turn and scrutinize me as she aimed for the opposite sidewalk. I remained staring, inert, hands still in pockets. And then I carried on eastward. Troubled.

The woman had shoplifted. Stolen property in plain sight. Exploited someone else's livelihood. Defied me and the law. Did she need ginger for supper, for someone else, a sore throat? Was her purse empty? Did shopkeepers know and indulge her? Should I have offered to buy on her behalf? There was so much ginger there.

I let it go. But I felt momentary resentment over having to face a moral dilemma. I contemplated my reaction for days afterwards. I asked others what they thought. There were as many opinions as there were ginger roots on that stall.

Canada strong

Restoration efforts continue across the county in light of the ice storm that slammed the region at the end of March. NB Power/Énergie NB hydro trucks from New Brunswick arrived the first week of April to assist with hydro restoration across the county. They have since been joined by crews from Saskatchewan, to support the ongoing efforts of local crews. /photo submitted by Mickey Bonham

Forty-five beds set up at the warming centre at the Minden arena. While the beds had only been needed a handful of times over the duration of the state of emergency, staff kept them set up just in case the need arose for locals. /EMILY STONEHOUSE staff

Krista McAlpine, Jodi Whalen, Amanda Dougherty, and Mayor Bob Carter were working in the kitchen at the warming centre on April 5.

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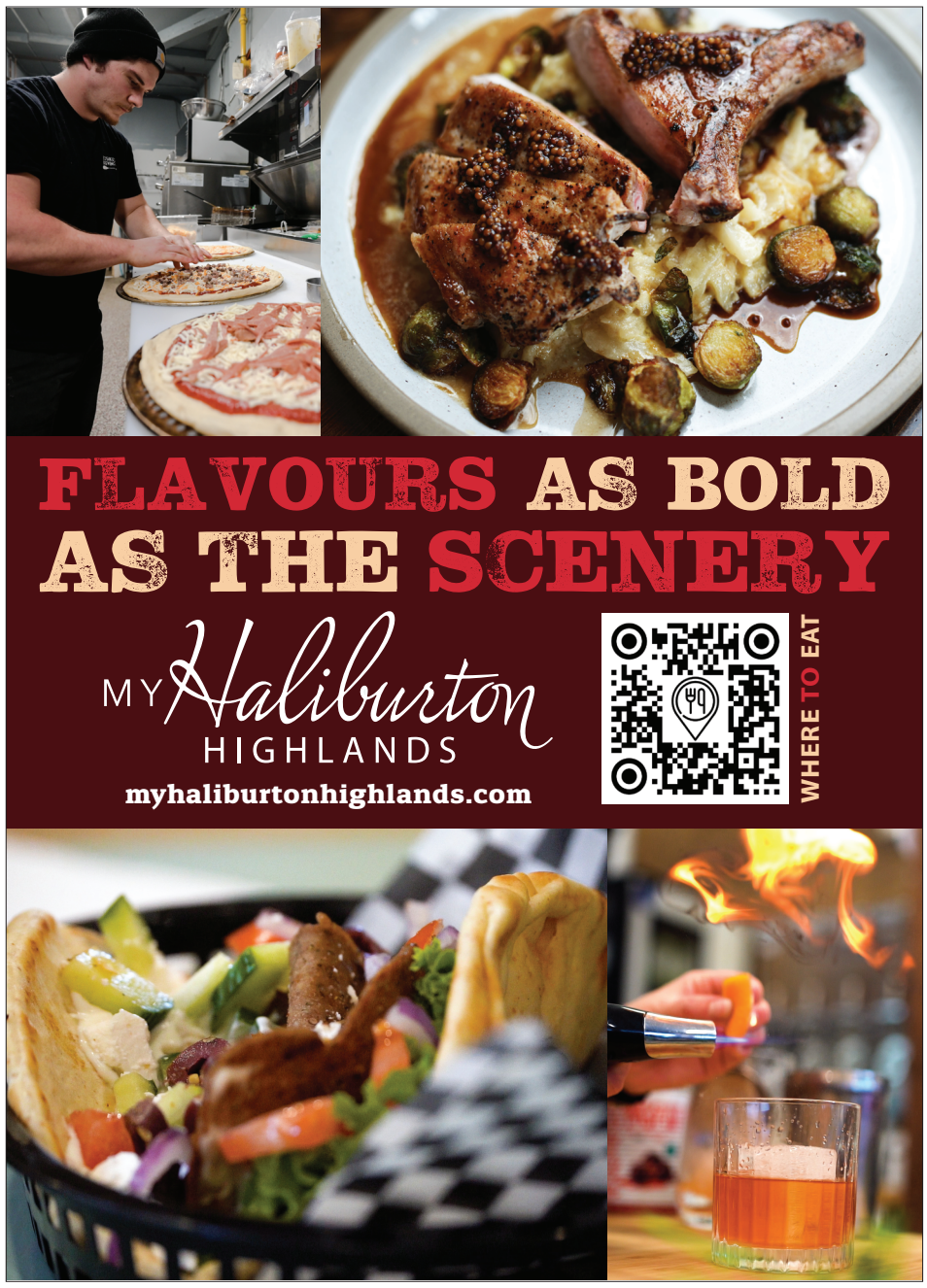

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Wanted: Local Kids who Listen to Mother Nature

EMILY STONEHOUSE
County Life Editor

The Ontario Highlands Tourism Organization (OHTO) wants to hear the voice of Mother Nature. But not from traditional artists; they specifically want to hear from the youth of the community.

"We know that young people have powerful perspectives and often the clearest voices when it comes to caring for nature," said Nicole Whiting, the executive director of OHTO. "This contest gives them a chance to be heard."

Haliburton County is a member of OHTO, the not-for-profit provincial organization, which focuses on supporting tourism initiatives in individual communities within the region. Beyond the county, OHTO also works with partners in Lanark, Renfrew, Frontenac, Hastings, and Lennox and Addington.

Since 2010, OHTO has been dedicated to maintaining a 'wander sustainably' approach to tourism, which includes marketing, product and experience development, investment attraction, workforce and skills development, and research.

As of October of last year, OHTO was recognized as a bronze certified destination for sustainable tourism.

FILE

"The two-year long process required OHTO to assess sustainability performance across four categories," shared a media release on the achievement; "environmental, socio-economic, natural and cultural, and management using GreenStep's Sustainable Tourism Destination Standard."

As a part of maintaining this sustainable approach, OHTO recently launched their 'If Nature Had a Voice' contest, which invites students in Grades 1 through 8 from across Ontario's Highlands region to imagine what Mother Nature might say - if she could speak.

"This campaign aligns with OHTO's commitment to its Wander Sustainably approach to tourism," reads an OHTO press release, "and is part of a broader marketing effort to highlight sustainable tourism and give nature a 'voice' by sharing the stories and information it would want visitors to know."

The submissions are split up by age level, with Grades 1 to 4 required to submit a drawing with a short, written response to complete the sentence: "If Mother Nature could speak, she would tell us…"

For the Grades 5 to 8 age range, students can choose to submit either a written piece of up to 250 words, or an artistic creation in any medium (drawing, painting, collage, etc,) with a caption.

OHTO will select one winner from each grade, who will receive a $50 gift card to a local business of their choice, as well as features on OHTO's social media channels. Entries will be accepted from April 1 to April 30, 2025. Winners will be announced by May 15 on OHTO's social media channels.

To submit a piece, digitally email info@ohto.ca with the subject line: "Mother Nature Contest Submission – [Student's Name] – [Grade]." For full contest rules and eligibility contact info@ohto.ca.

Adding light to darkness

TERESA JORDAN
Community Living Contemplations

WHEN THE ice storm began it was a gentle storm at my house, then as it wore on it was clear, this was going to be a great challenge. Like lots of people, I lost power for a while and lost many of my favourite trees around the yard. It is a storm that will be remembered in our discussions for a long time… remember when we had all those challenges and crises in the ice storm of 2025? We will commiserate and discuss our hardships.

However, there were things to be found in these past few days. Things to be remembered with equal fervor. I saw great community solidarity on my neighbourhood Facebook groups, helping one another, checking in, passing on information about roads, picking up baby formula and diapers for strangers. People checking on others, lending out generators offering help to clear trees blocking driveways. Communities opening warming stations and community members with woodstoves and generators offering their own homes as places to get warm and have a coffee.

And so much of what we were missing we normally take completely for granted. The hot shower, the charged phone, the Wi-Fi, the lights, the water that magically flushes the toilet without a second thought. All these things that we depend on but often fail to even notice as a blessing in our day to day lives. We are now on the other side of the emergency; we are back into electric lights in all our homes.

So how about this, let's notice, let's just take a minute to acknowledge the wonder of our conveniences after we missed them for a time. Let's think about how we can offer our gifts and connection to our communities even when not in a state of emergency due to weather.

We often feel our challenges so deeply because, well, they are difficult and heart-wrenching. And just when we get through one crisis another one is brewing. Does a deeper connection make a difference, a community where everyone is a part of the neighbourhood network, ready to share what they have. Having that place or role or contribution in the community will not hold back storms and challenges. Rotten things happen to us and our neighbours. It is so easy to get caught up in the rotten difficulties and darkness. It's almost easier to see what's wrong, it feels like work to see what is good and comfortable and taken for granted. But maybe, just a few moments in the morning or evening to think about what is great, what is working and all we have could break it up, alter the course, lighten the load and light up our days in all the dark corners.

Editor's Thoughts

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Send your letters to the editor to emily@haliburtonpress.com. Letters must be signed and include a phone number.

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Writer's block

EMILY STONEHOUSE
County Life Editor

I AM OFTEN asked if I experience writer's block. I write an average of about 5000 words a week, which are spread out across three newspapers. With each paper, I am mindful about shifting gears to fit into the voice I am developing for readers. While the *Minden Times*, the *Haliburton Echo,* and *County Life* often have some overlapping stories (as is the nature of rural newspapers), they are still different papers, serving different audiences, different purposes, and different communities.

So do I ever hit a block in the road that prevents me from getting those 5000 words out each week?

Quite simply: yes. This is a job that has the flexibility to allow me to walk away and redirect my thoughts on occasion. But no matter what, at the end of the day, I need those 5000 words. I won't be the first editor in 150 years (give or take) of our newspapers' production who had to skip a week because she can't collect her thoughts.

And I won't make this article a song and dance about how to break the gruelling grips of writer's block, because I truly don't know. It would be hypocritical of me to share my insight when it's a problem I myself have not solved.

But a recent shift in perspective has given me some tools to push forward during those times when it feels like the walls are just too high to climb over to the bubbling creativity on the other side.

I came to the startling (but perhaps obvious) realization that if I am experiencing writer's block, it must mean that by definition, I am a writer. I. Am. A. Writer.

Four simple words that I never truly thought could possibly be chained together for me. As I grew up in Haliburton, weaving my way down the hill of schools that overlook Head Lake, I dabbled in varying academic explorations. Art was fun, drama was colourful, math was forever an uphill battle, science was something I just couldn't grasp. But words, words were different.

I loved when teachers assigned books to read. A few chapters each night. I'd get a free pass from evening chores to do my homework, which sounded burdensome but in reality was the cozy pleasure of curling up and devouring words. Writing was something I did to earn grades. And while it came easier to me than maths and sciences, I didn't realize it could be a lifestyle.

But here we are. I. Am. A. Writer.

And, like any real writer, I experience writer's block. And that's a good thing.

Because to me, hitting a wall doesn't mean I come to a stop. It means I have time. Time to think. Time to look back. Time to sit in my thoughts. Time to unpack my feelings. Time to plan a way over that wall, where the promise of creativity bubbles and boils to the surface.

And this time presents itself differently. Sometimes it means I should take the dogs for a walk, or play with my kids, or even just simply gaze out the window until my brain is ready to connect A to B and we can all move forward.

Often, my cure for writer's block is ironically enough just simply writing something entirely different. Taking a break from council meetings to explore my editorials, shifting gears from trades to tourism, politics to people, whatever is on the roster for the week. Sometimes it even helps to jump into *County Life*; my creative outlet, where the voices of our community shine bright.

And within a matter of days, we have a newspaper. The stories embedded in ink for our community to read, to savour, to keep, to burn. Whatever they choose.

So when that dam presents itself, just remind yourself that it's always just temporary.

And great news: if you're experiencing writer's block, that means you've made it.

You're a writer.

Top 10 employment requirements for the Easter Bunny

STEVE GALEA
Humour Columnist

EASTER IS coming soon. That means that countless new Easter bunnies are being hired. If you happen to be one, or know an under-employed rabbit that need a seasonal gig, you should be aware of the top 10 employment requirements for the job. They are:

1. Do not be tardy.
2. Show up ready for work, with a proper hare cut.
3. Promise to leave no pellets near the chocolate eggs.
4. Agree not to hide Easter eggs on top heat registers.
5. When someone asks you a question, try to be all ears.
6. Unless an overzealous child bites your ear off, there is no severance pay.
7. Do not egg the hounds.
8. While admittedly funny, do not leave Easter eggs under the laying hens.
9. Leave the bling at home – the workplace is no place to show off your 14-carrot jewelry.
10. You're here to do a job. Hop to it.

Journey

Ribbons of black wings rippling across Sky,
light leaking through clouds, after days of Rain, illuminating the flight of geese,
their honking, blaring through Air, silencing the crows that perch on the tops of trees,
listening, like me, a speck on the ground, to the sound of geese returning, after a winter away,
a few geese straying from their Vees, to fly in pairs or threes, finding their place back in the line,
one goose going rogue, distancing itself from its flock, as they fly so high up in Sky,
I wonder whether they will stay here, or are just passing through, returning to a familiar place,
that welcomes them back, year after year, their wings, carriers of spring and new beginnings,
bringing only each other along on their flight,
not burdened by things, the way humans seem to be, down here on the ground,
listening to the honks of geese, silencing the swirls of my thoughts,
as I crane my neck up to watch Vee after Vee flying across the highway of Sky,
marveling at the precision and symmetry of their flight, a
wondering whether they ever stray from their path, on purpose or by accident,
stopping to rest when night falls, in an unfamiliar place, or do they pause in the places
they remember and know,
a crow interrupting my reverie, its screeches scratching Air, as I turn my eyes away from Sky and
the fleet of geese,
peering at the lone crow, perched on the top of the tree, wondering what it's cawing about,
maybe waiting for a response from another crow, the honks of geese growing fainter,
the Vees disappearing from view,
swallowed by Sky, their wings flapping towards a familiar place, beyond where my eyes can see,
journeying each spring through Snow and Rain and sunlight, the flocks of geese, that remain together,
flying in unison,
trailing one another on their flight, letting the leader at the tip of the Vee guide them,
sometimes changing positions in mid-flight, another goose taking over, without squabble or fight,
their choreography, up in Sky, a marvel to behold, as I remain standing here on the road,
listening to the bickering of a pair of crows, watching 'till the very last Vee vanishes from sight,
wondering what this spring will bring, as invisible wings flap high up in Sky,
leading and following one another on their flight, returning to the places they know,
the Lakes and Rivers waiting for them to reach the end of their journey.

Sylvie Kalenda

Dancing with the local stars

Skyline Dance Studio held their annual showcase recital on April 6 at the Northern Lights Performing Arts Pavilion in Haliburton. The nearly three-hour show had an afternoon edition and an evening edition, in which the studio's competitive dancers strut their stuff for two sold-out crowds. The dancers headed off to Collingwood to represent Haliburton County on April 10 and 11. /TIM YANO staff photographer

Hiking Haliburton, one week at a time

EMILY STONEHOUSE
County Life Editor

Rod Frketich has spent a lifetime listening and sharing the stories of Canadians, and hopes to add that component when guiding the upcoming Sunday Rambles along the Haliburton Rail Trail. /photo submitted

There's no shortage of stories in Haliburton County, and Rod Frketich wants to learn them all.

Originally hailing from the Hamilton region, Frketich has stepped into the role of hike leader for the popular Sunday Rambles, presented by Friends of the Rail Trail.

The casual guided hikes are scheduled for every Sunday over the months of April and May, and start at 11 a.m. for all who care to join. The hikes pride themselves on being social, open to all ages, and 'at your own pace' for anyone interested in checking them out.

"I've spent a lot of time hiking the area," said Frketich. "But to go out with a group of people, that's a different way of experiencing it."

Frketich spent his career as a photojournalist, and has worked across the province of Ontario, including Barry's Bay, Orillia, Pembroke, and Timmins. He has spent time with Canadian Press, the Globe and Mail, and most recently, the Waterloo Record.

Upon his retirement from photojournalism, Frketich dove into his other interest; exploring different regions, often with a camera on his back. He has regularly been visiting the area to spend time at his partner's cottage in Moore Falls, and has a deep passion for the stories of rural communities. "It's really the history part I am interested in," he said. "I've spent a lot of time wandering around the area, but I want to learn more."

With an avid interest in hiking, Frketich is no stranger to guiding a group. "I always want to make sure what we do matches the group we have," he said, noting the different comfort and experience levels of the hikers.

Sunday Rambles are designed to explore a chunk of the Rail Trail each week. On April 20, hikers will start out at the parking lot at the Lochlin Community Centre, and on April 27, they will drive down Ritchie Falls Road to 'the falls'. Then for May, to kick off the month on May 4, the starting point will be Cemetery Road in Gelert, followed by Milburn Road on May 11, Geeza Road on May 18, Howland Junction Road on May 25, and finally, on June 1, 7286 Gelert Road just outside the village of Haliburton.

The intention of the hikes is to familiarize hikers with the Rail Trail, as well as the opportunity to learn about history, flora and fauna, wildlife, and the natural wonders of the designated hiking space.

And thats what Frketich is most excited about. "I really want to hear all the stories of the area," he said. Frketich encourages hikers to bring a camera, if they are interested, and he can share his knowledge that he gained from a lifetime in the industry.

All Sunday Rambles are free of charge, and designed for all levels of hiking. No pre-registration is required.

For more information, follow Friends of the Rail Trail Haliburton on Facebook, or call or text 365-323-3839.

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Writing on the Senior Side

You got this

GAIL STELTER
County Life Contributor

Where did that come from? I didn't put that there. I am not having fun. I am working on my writer's website. I have a great web designer and friend and because of her, I know how to do this. Well, a little more practice wouldn't hurt. My head's cut off in that picture. Do I care? I think it's better that way. If I can't fix it, perhaps I can get rid of it ... I keep trying ... later ... I could have written a new story for my book in the time I spent messing around on this. What was I thinking? I paid for my website for two years. It seemed like a good idea, no, not a good idea. Let's be realistic: I don't need a website. I thought it was a fun idea.

I was the principal who told my grade eight graduates and their parents that to be successful in university three characteristics are the most important: average intellectual ability, time management skills and a good work ethic. I'm the one who knew that these three characteristics are the key, not just for success at school. but also for success in life.

And, remember me, I'm the senior who believes you are never too old to learn something new. I believe in the importance of being a lifelong learner. Learning new things keeps our brains active and can reduce the risk of cognitive decline. It keeps us sharp. As my list of physical ailments seems to be ever-increasing, it feels good to be able to also increase, or at the very least maintain my brain power.

I checked out the internet, as I often do, and I started to laugh when I read this question: Can a person over 70 still learn something new? I laughed but I was also annoyed by it. Making assumptions about people because of their age is ageist and the assumption behind this question is ridiculous. Ageism, as defined by the World Health Organization (WHO), encompasses stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination towards others or oneself based on age. I have experienced ageism a few times and it usually makes me inwardly smile. I was dancing all night at an Irish pub in Kingston where my son's band was playing. I did pause every now and then to catch my breath but I lasted until the very end at 1 a.m. I love to dance and sing along with the band and I love being part of it all. I danced with my husband and our other children who also came, and with my grandson and his university friends who I met that night. These young ones were fun and I could tell they thought of me as an old lady but a fun (maybe just a little crazy but great dancer) old lady. At the end of the night, one of the girls came over to where I was sitting, hugged me and said she loved meeting me. Sometimes being treated differently because you are old is pretty neat. Other times, not so much. I have experienced ageism by young writers in courses I was taking. I will give them the benefit of the doubt and say I could easily see that they "wondered" why someone my age would still be taking courses. I hope they all live long lives, long enough to understand.

So back to the ridiculous ageist question. You know the answer but perhaps there is a young one who needs to be reminded. Yes, we can learn new skills our whole life. Research shows that our brains remain capable of forming new connections and learning throughout life, a concept known as neuroplasticity. So while our bodies get older, our brain can change and adapt throughout life, reorganizing its structure and functions in response to experiences and learning. No more wondering, no more excuses. I can and will keep learning new things.

Back to my website. It's set up with an accompanying new Gmail address. I don't know how to add a second Gmail account. I checked this out and the instructions were so simple, except it didn't work. I asked my daughter to help me. I am not giving in; I'm employing my time management skills. She will do it in minutes, I will have more time to write. Next comes my blog, called *Gates Open*. Maybe the kids were right, nobody reads blogs. Oh, I can't let that stop me. I have only written one entry. It's time to employ my work ethic and set up a schedule. Mabe two entries a week. Yes, that sounds doable. If people go to my website they will see links to social media. I am learning to post about writing on Blue Sky, Substack and Instagram. I even have a connection to YouTube so I need to record something there too. I can do this but I know it might take me a little more time and work to perfect it.

Finally, Senior Siders what are you learning that is a new skill or activity? A better question might be, what would you like to learn? Your brain won't let you down. Your body might limit you but you will adapt and use your excellent time management skills and great work ethic to succeed. Go for it.

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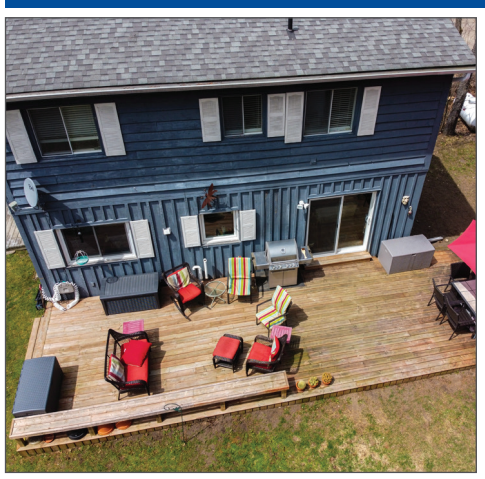

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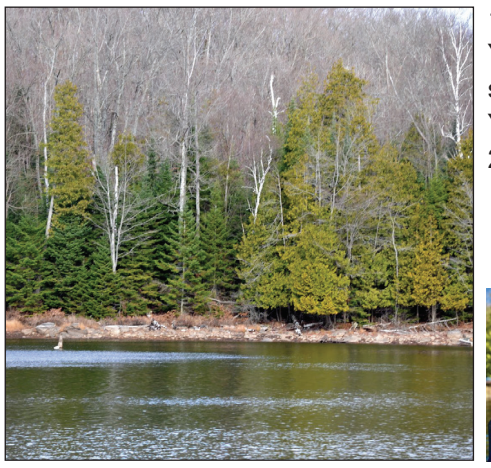

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Precious puddles: The importance of vernal pools

RICK WHITTEKER
County Life Contributor

When spring finally allows our wonderful hiking trails to be passable, watch for vernal pools, those seasonal forest temporary wetlands that provide an oasis for breeding amphibians and invertebrates. Unlike the post rain splash pads of our childhood, vernal pools will last from three weeks to three months and are an oasis in the forest, a biodiversity hotspot and essential for survival for many water-dependent forest critters.

Vernal pools form in landscape depressions from melted snow and spring rains. With no inflow or outflow from a stream or creek, they are unique and isolated wetlands with a short lifespan. Their transient nature makes them both ideal and problematic for breeding frogs and salamanders. Usually dry by mid to late summer, these pools provide a limited window of time for eggs to hatch and metamorphosize. While using temporary wetlands for breeding might be considered a questionable strategy, these short-lived wetlands cannot support fish, a major predator of amphibian eggs and larva.

In Ontario, species like the wood frog, chorus frog, mole salamander and two endangered species, the Jefferson salamander and the small-mouthed salamander, depend on vernal pools for their survival. In Haliburton County, the spotted salamander and the blue spotted salamander amongst others are regular vernal pool breeders.

Vulnerable to disturbance, forestry operations can open the canopy enough to potentially increase the rate of evaporation. A hot, dry spring can shorten the lifespan of these pools, putting the development of the tiny embryos on the clock. Two to three months is needed for some salamander larva to change from a gill breathing aquatic organism to a lung breathing terrestrial species.

While wood frogs, chorus frogs and spring peepers announce their amorous intentions through a cacophony of calls, behind the scenes, salamanders are going about their business quietly. Most salamanders are mute; they use chemical pheromone secretions to entice prospective partners. For some species, courtship also includes elaborate tail wagging and some basic dance moves to seal the deal with potential mates.

The spotted salamander is a common user of vernal pools for breeding in Haliburton County. /Photo by Shelley Hunt

Most species of salamander fertilize their eggs internally. The male deposits small jelly encapsulated sperm packets on the ground. These cone-shaped mounds called spermatophores are about one centimeter high, like tiny, white-tipped stalagmites. The male leads the receptive female to the location of these mounds where she uptakes them into her cloaca. Eggs are laid two to three days days later, on plant stems or twigs in a nearby vernal pool.

With exceptions, egg identification of different amphibians includes the following features: American toad eggs are laid in strands while frog eggs have a black embryo surrounded by a clear membrane and are laid stuck together into an egg mass. The wood frog is a regular vernal pool breeder and lays egg masses that appear on the water surface looking like a pile of bubble-like marbles. Salamander eggs look like frog eggs usually with less embryos and an additional protective gel around them which holds the egg mass together in a gelatin-like clump. Depending on the species, amphibian eggs can be found in permanent wetlands or vernal pools.

Vernal pools also play host to a range of invertebrates. Unique to these ephemeral pools is a small crustacean called the fairy shrimp. Unlike the magical winged fairy, they do not flit amongst the spring wildflowers but they swim upside down in water. Instead of graceful, lacy wings, they have nine pairs of legs that propel them through the cold spring waters of vernal pools. Semi-transparent and one to two centimeters long, they are orange to pink in colour.

Fairy shrimp lay two types of eggs: one hatches in the spring and the other lays dormant on the bottom of the pool even after the pool dries up. This hardy cyst can survive until the following spring when the pool fills again and they can hatch. Mosquito larvae also make vernal pools home, providing a valuable food source for young salamanders and frogs.

Adult and recently metamorphosed amphibians will leave the vernal pool and head into the surrounding landscape. Although they depend on seasonal pools to reproduce and for their young to grow, adults spend the summer, fall, and winter in the upland forests nearby where they find food, shelter, and overwintering sites.

On any given rainy spring night, salamanders will migrate to breed, commonly to the same vernal pool where they were born. This instinctual drive puts salamanders at risk when developments like roads lie between their ancestral pool and the surrounding forest. This is an issue for the endangered Jefferson salamander in the City of Burlington. Lying between their forested hibernation sites and the pool of their birth, King Road is temporarily closed in March to help protect the Jefferson salamander during their spring migration. A good news story when people come together in the name of wildlife conservation!

Vernal pools support a range of diverse life. Some species rely on these pools for survival and others, like the spring peeper, American toad and the wood turtle, use them as a place to forage or to find shelter. Here today, gone tomorrow, these seasonal pools need to be protected to support the richness of our forest biodiversity.

Legion Events

Branch 441 Kinmount

Monday: Bid euchre 1 p.m., Cornhole 7 p.m. (upstairs) Ladies Darts 7:30 p.m. (downstairs)
Tuesday: Closed
Wednesday: Mixed darts 7:30 p.m.
Thursday: General meeting (3rd week) Members only 7:30 p.m.
Friday: Chair yoga 10 a.m. Bingo, doors open at 5 p.m. with a weekly supper special. Canteen opens at 4 p.m.
Saturday: Meat draw 5 p.m. Canteen opens at 3 p.m.
Sunday: Ladies Auxiliary meeting (members only) 3rd week at 2 p.m.
Please follow our Facebook page - Royal Canadian Legion Branch 441 Kinmount. Do you need a space to host an event: book our hall today, call 705-488-3462 and leave a message or call Teresa at 705-928-7105.

Branch 129 Haliburton

Mondays: Bridge 1 p.m. Schofield Rm. Youth darts 6:30 to 8 p.m. Clubroom 10 to 18 years of age. All are welcome, no experience necessary
Tuesdays: League darts 7 p.m.
Wednesdays: Bid Euchre 1 p.m. start – Main Hall. Bingo doors open at 6 p.m. Bingo starts at 7 p.m. First Wed of each month with jackpot. Follow Facebook.com/Branch129 Bingo for the most up-to-date information
Thursdays: General Meeting third Thursday of the month, 6:30 p.m. All members urged to attend. Ladies Auxiliary last Thursday of the month at 1 p.m.
Fridays: Five meat draw, five prizes each draw, first draw 4:30 p.m., last draw 6:30 p.m. Tickets $2 per draw. Paul Sisson, MC. Friday fun darts from 4:30 p.m. and onwards. 50/50 Draw 5:40 p.m.
Whether you're planning a function for 10 or 200, call Cheryl Waller at 905-447-7741, email haliburtonlegionrentals@gmail.com or visit haliburtonlegion.com. Everyone is welcome!
Club room hours: Mon. 3 to 6 p.m., Tues. 3 to 9 p.m., Wed/Thurs. 3 to 6 p.m. Fri. 3 to 7 p.m.

Branch 636 Minden

Lunch - Monday to Friday
Monday: Rug Hookers every second week. Bid Euchre 1 to 3 p.m.
Tuesday: Food 5 p.m. Canoe FM Bingo 6 p.m.
Thursday: Cribbage 1 to 3 p.m., Darts 7 to 9 p.m. and Euchre 7 to 9 p.m.
Every other Friday: Karaoke 8 to 11 p.m.
Friday Fish & Chips, Wings. Lunch 11a.m. to 2 p.m. and Dinner 4 to 7 p.m.
Saturday All Day Breakfast 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. with three Meat draws at 11 a.m.
Call ahead any day for take-out: 705-286-4541. Schedules are subject to change without notice. Check our Facebook page Minden Legion Branch 636 for more info.

Branch 624 Wilberforce

Hours - Sunday: Special Events Only, Monday: 7 to 10 p.m., Tuesday: Closed, Wednesday: 2 to 6 p.m., Thursday: 7 to 10 p.m., Friday: 2 to 11 p.m., Saturday: 2 to 9 p.m.
Mondays - April 21, 28 – Darts, $5/player, 7 p.m.
Wednesdays - April 23, 30 Darts, $4/player, 2 p.m.
Thursdays - April 24, HHHS Social Rec,10 a.m.
Fridays -April 18, Fish & Chips, 5 to 8 p.m.
$15 - 1 piece, $20 - 2 pieces
Saturdays - April 19, 26 Meat Draw, 3 p.m.
April 25 - Wings and Jam Session, $15/lb, 5 to 8 p.m.
April 25 - Seniors 55+ Lunch, $17, noon
April 26 - Sock Hop Dance, 1950s and 1960s music, Spot Dance Prizes, Best Dressed Prizes, Hot Dogs Served, $5 at the door. 8 p.m. to 1 a.m.
Call the Legion for more info 705-448-2221

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County Life welcomes photo submissions depicting life in the Highlands. Email emily@ haliburtonpress.com. Please ensure images are high resolution - 200 dpi, 10 inches at its longest edge.

A peaceful sunrise over Dark Lake in Wilberforce by Vivien Mausz

American Goldfinch by Jill Moulton

Common Merganser by Debi Ireland

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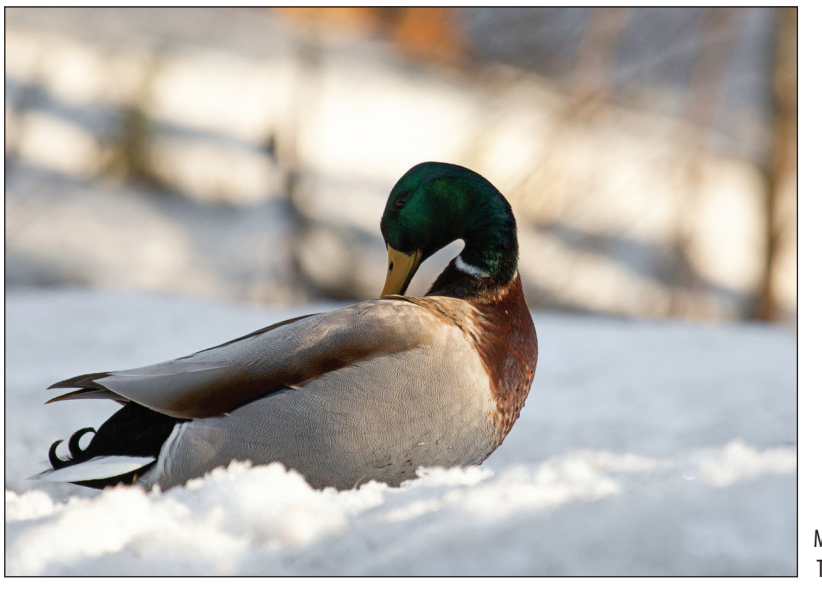
To see your not-for-profit or community event listed at no charge in our Summer Guide Magazine, send an email to
HaliburtonSummerGuide@gmail.com
no later than Wednesday May 7

THE ECHO HALIBURTON COUNTY | County Life | The Times MINDEN ONTARIO

Fisher behind rock by Tammy Nash

Ice almost out on Lake Kashagawigamog by Jill Moulton

A snow bath by Vivien Mausz



Mallard duck by Tammy Nash

FEDERAL ELECTION / MONDAY, APRIL 28

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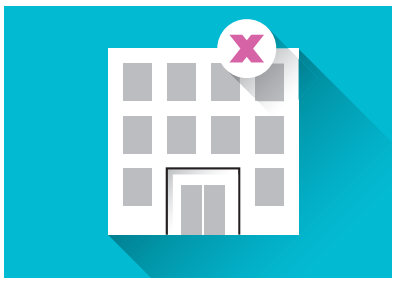
At your assigned advance polling station from Friday, April 18, to Monday, April 21, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.



At any Elections Canada office until Tuesday, April 22, 6 p.m.

By mail – Apply by Tuesday, April 22, 6 p.m.

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400 EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Youth Coordinator Cambridge Street United Church in Lindsay, ON, is seeking a Youth Coordinator and play a vital role in fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment for the young members of our congregation, guiding them in their spiritual journey, and organizing engaging activities that promote growth and community. The position begins with an average of 20 hours a week for a 3-month period with an initial focus of continuing to develop a core group of children on Sunday mornings in a welcoming, safe, and faith-based environment based on the teachings of Jesus. The plan is to also explore programming for events over the summer months. A position description can be found on our website www.theunitedchurch.com. Application deadline April 15, 2025.

400 EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Hyland Ice Supply is now accepting applications for the 2025 summer season for Drivers Helpers, Production Staff and Drivers (D, DZ, G). Interviews will be held early April. Please contact us via e-mail or telephone **info@hylandice.com 1-705-448-2973** Attention Carol

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Private campground in the Minden/Haliburton area requires a reliable **SUMMER MAINTENANCE PERSON** from May 10 to October 13, 2025. $20/hour. Duties Include: general maintenance; cleaning park grounds, rec hall, washrooms; operating small grass cutting equipment; ability to lift over 40 lbs; assisting with various small projects as assigned. Approximately 5 hours a day. Morning start time. Willing to work weekends. Must possess a valid "G" driver's license. A good driving record is required. Please submit your resume to **neca.bod@gmail.com.**

Community Events

Send your event listing to classifieds@haliburtonpress.com

Pancake Breakfast
When: April 12 8 a.m. to noon
Where: Highland Grove Community Centre
Pancakes, Sausages, Bacon, Toast, Eggs, Coffee, Local Syrup. $12 per Adult, $8 per Child. Kids 5 and under are free! Proceeds will benefit St. John Vianney and Mission Churches.

Connecting to the power of forests to improve our well-being
When: Tuesday, April 15 at 7 p.m.
Where: Schofield Room, Haliburton Legion, 719 Mountain St., Haliburton
You are invited to a discussion with Dr. Kari Krogh, co-founder of EcoWisdom Forest Preserve. Kari will briefly discuss the forest medicine research showing that mindful nature connection (forest bathing/shinrin yoku) improves physical, emotional and cognitive function, and will guide participants in practices to support their own well-being. This is part of a continuing series on "Making our Communities Better Places", and will be begin with music by The Porter Brothers – George and Steve. It is open to all, no admission charge, light refreshments provided. Hosted by the Baha'i community of Haliburton.

Loop Troupe Little Theatre Group Variety Show
When: Evening of May 3
Where: Wilberforce in the Lloyd Watson Community Centre
Looking for Talent, Unique Skills, Bring your Party Tricks! Poets, Acrobats, Puppeteers, Magicians, Mime, Jester, Clown, Wrestlers, Contortionists, Marshal Arts, Singers, Dancers, Comedians, Fiddlers, Actors, Jokesters, Flutist, Guitar Players, Piano Players.
For details and to let us know you might be interested email kcsriley@gmail.com. Proceeds from admission to improve the acoustics in the Lloyd Watson Community Centre.

Garden Start Up and Season Extension
When: May 6, 7:00pm
Where: Minden Community Centre - 55 Parkside St. Minden
Do you love gardening? Please join the Minden & District Horticultural Society at the Minden Community Centre, 55 Parkside St. Minden. Guest speaker Jon Faulkner will be discussing 'Garden Start Up and Season Extension', followed by the monthly society meeting.

Minden Curling Club Spring Dance
When: May 10, 4:30 to 10 p.m.
Where: Minden Curling Club
Roast Beef Dinner (Vegetarian available) Dinner and Dance $45 pp. Music only from 6:30 p.m. $25 pp. Music by The Recycled Teenagers Lloyd and Susanne Taylor. Everyone welcome! Tickets available at LET'S GET LOCAL & MOLLY'S MARKET AND BAKERY or call Wynn Taylor 705-286-3286, Lynda Litwin 705-487-8511,Bob Barron 705-731-7730

Recurring events

Friends of the Haliburton County Public Library New Book Nook Hours
When: 1st, 3rd Tuesday of the month - 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Where: Minden Hills Branch, 176 Bobcaygeon Rd. Minden
Choose from a variety of gently read books: thrillers, mysteries, romance, biographies, children and youth selections, Canadian authors, fiction, science fiction/fantasy, sports, spiritual and other non-fiction books. Bring a reusable bag. Payment is by cash donation. All money raised supports library enhancements and programmes for all libraries in the county.

TOPS: Take Off Pounds Sensibly
When: Monday mornings 9:30 to 11 a.m.
Where: Haliburton Legion Branch 129, upper level
Admission: Yearly membership of $59
A non-profit/commercial network of weight-loss support groups, offers programs for healthy living and weight management.

Bridge for Seniors
When: Mondays at 1 p.m.
Where: Haliburton Legion - Schofield Room
All welcome.

Haliburton Legion Walking Group
When: Mondays at 9 to 10 a.m.
Where: Haliburton Legion - Remembrance Hall
A safe walking environment. Lead by an Occupational therapist.

Free Balanced Fitness and Active Social Senior Classes
When: Every second and fourth Tuesday of each month at 10 to 11 a.m.
Where: Haliburton Legion - Remembrance Hall
All seniors are welcome. Group led by Registered Recreation Therapist

Bid Euchre
When: Wednesdays at 1 p.m.
Where: Haliburton Legion - Remembrance Hall
All welcome!

Seniors Chair Exercises
When: Thursdays at 1 p.m.
Where: St. George's Anglican Church, 617 Mountain Street
Please join us for safe and gentle exercises for seniors to help with balance, strength and flexibility. Free to join.

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High school renovation plan jumps to $4.5M

by PETER DOWNS
Staff Reporter

A $2.8-million face-lift originally planned for Haliburton Highlands Secondary School has now evolved into a $4.5-million proposal for major reconstructive surgery.

But once the bandages come off, the board and its architect are hoping their patient should be fit and healthy for up to the next three decades.

Over the past several months school board administrators have been gazing into a crystal ball with HHSS principal Gary Brohman, trying to see what kind of high school the county will need 25 years into the future.

And what they saw in the vision that emerged was a vastly different school building than the existing one.

Last week the administrators unveiled a preliminary renovation plan they believe could transform HHSS into the ideal school to serve the community's needs well into the 21st Century.

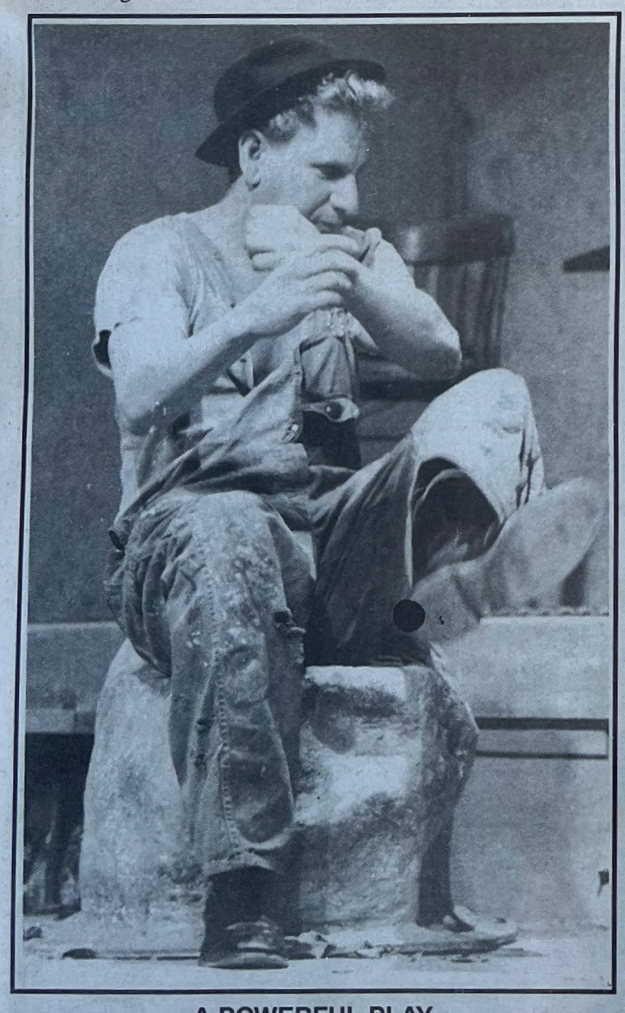
The multi-million-dollar plan, which is only a proposal at this stage, would require the board to undertake massive reconstruction

The architect hired by the board to carry out the job estimates the cost of the work could ring in at about $4.5-million. And that price does not include the normally high cost of removing asbestos from existing walls during the upgrade.

The board has already received approval from the province for approximately 50 per cent funding to put a $2.8-million addition on the high school.

See SCHOOL page 3

DECISIONS, DECISIONS: Adam Aggett, the chairman of Federation of Student Rights and Opinions, looks for advice during the tough negotiating session with Peter Forgrave, principal of Archie Stouffer Elementary School. Along with fellow ASES Grade 8 students Katrina Matysek, Sarah Bloomfield and Daniel Vanderlip (hidden), Adam presented a list of grievances during the mock student strike last week. For story, please see page 6



A POWERFUL PLAY
The Highlands Little Theatre production of A Moon for the Misbegotten opened last Friday and continues this coming weekend. Above, lead Tom Robinson. For a review, see page 28

MNR bans brush burning

Lack of rain raises danger of fires getting out of control

by STEPHEN SHAW
Staff Reporter

The recent dry spell and gusting winds have turned area fields and forests into tinderboxes, say MNR fire officials who are urging people to put off their spring burnings.

The Ministry of Natural Resources has cancelled all fire permits after more than 63 wildfires during the last two weeks.

Last weekend alone, there were 27 forest, grass and brush fires in the county and by Wednesday, the number grew to more than 40 in the Haliburton, Pembroke and Bancroft areas.

In comparison, there was just one fire last March.

A remote forest area near Loon Lake in Monmouth caught fire Sunday morning roaring through two hectares of cutover. Six MNR firefighters gained access by helicopter and four-wheel drive vehicles. It took them until later in the evening to extinguish the blaze, which was still smoldering yesterday.

"It was burning pretty hot. It's pretty unusual for the hardwoods to catch fire this early but it's just so dry this year," says MNR Fire Prevention Technician John Bishop.

In Dysart last Sunday, firefighters worked two hours to control a two-acre brush fire at Eagle Lake. A West Guilford burning also brought firefighters to the scene recently.

"There was no property loss in those but that's a real possibility if a wildfire gets away," said Dysart Fire Chief Miles Maughan.

While a cool, damp couple of days late last week gave firefighters a bit of breathing space, there was no siginificant amount

See FIRES page 3

Local Bell workers on hold over next job cuts

by STEPHEN SHAW
Staff Reporter

Local Bell Canada workers are waiting on hold to find out whether the phone company's massive cuts will affect them.

Bell announced last week it plans to slash 10,000 jobs from its workforce of 45,000 in what will be the largest labour downsizing in the nation's history.

"We don't really know what's happening in terms of how it will affect us locally," says Haliburton Highlands Supervisor Mel Watson. "We probably won't know for a few months."

Greg Coumbs, local union representative for the Communications, Electrical and Paperworkers of Canada, says Bell employees in the county have little concern that their jobs are in jeopardy.

"There's only the 20 guys up here and we're kept pretty busy so it's not like we're overstaffed . Basically we feel like we're pretty

See BELL page 2

INSIDE THIS WEEK:

Welcome to the new Echo
See this week's editorial .... page 10

Better recycling
Waste audit hopes to improve school's recycling habits... see page 4

An insider's view
Paul's story begins a series of articles looking inside women's shelters ... see Second Section Front

Time Travel
Monmouth Figure Skating Club stages its annual carnival before a delighted audience ... see page 33

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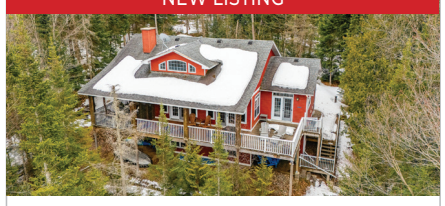

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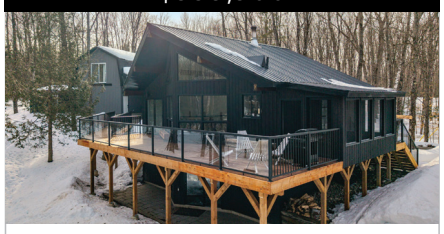

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